

WHMIS hazard classes

Why it's important

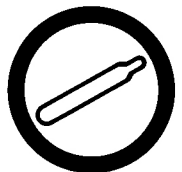
WHMIS was created to address the worker's right to know about the health and safety hazards associated with the hazardous materials they encounter on the job.

The three ways in which WHMIS requires information to be provided to workers are:

1. **Warning labels** on the containers of hazardous materials that provide information and warnings about those materials. These labels contain the hazard classes and symbols associated with the product in the container, as well as general precautions to be taken.
2. **Material safety data sheets (MSDS)** provide more detailed information and safe handling instructions.
3. **Worker training in WHMIS** for all workers who use, handle, store or work near hazardous materials so that they understand the specific content of warning labels and MSDS.

How to control the hazards

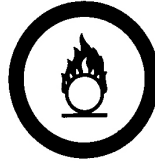
There are six classes of products. A product that shows characteristics of any of the six hazard classes is subject to the requirements of WHMIS. Each of the hazard classes is represented by one or more symbols. Both the symbol and the class of hazard it represents provide important information to employers and workers on how to use, handle and store the product.



Class A: Compressed gas (for example: oxygen, propane)



Class B: Flammable and combustible material (for example: paint thinner, gasoline)

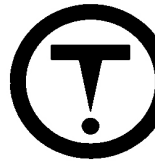


Class C: Oxidizing material (for example: chromic acid)

Class D: Poisonous and infectious material



• **Division 1 – immediate and serious toxic effects** (for example: anti-freeze)



• **Division 2 – other toxic effects** (for example: welding rods)



• **Division 3 – biohazardous infectious material** (for example: bacteria)



Class E: Corrosive material (for example: battery acid)



Class F: Dangerously reactive material (for example: vinyl acetate)

Show and tell

Talk about the WHMIS-controlled materials in your workplace. Use containers with the labels to show participants where the symbols and classes are on the products.

Ask participants to identify the symbols that are present on the labels.